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death, and all the horror of the final act. He (the lecturer) admitted that this view was "rather unsettling" at first, but he thought it could be shown that this was not what Shakespeare intended. It was nowhere definitely stated that Hamlet had any intention other than personal revenge at the earliest opportunity. In all his soliloquies he dwelt on some fault in his nature, which hindered this purpose. Goethe had said that Hamlet was "a beautiful noble, most moral nature, without the strength of nerve, which makes the hero, and he sank beneath a burden which he could neither bear nor cast off." Hamlet was a splendid failure, but why? He was not a failure in all kinds of action. He was capable of impulsive action, and of scheming—when he was sent to England he countermanded the plot against his life—but he failed in the highest kind of action, in the union of intelligence with will. He had not the stuff in him to carry him through to the end. Thought ran away with him—when he ought to have been acting he went on thinking. His words, "Conscience does make cowards of us all" were a reference to himself. In Act IV., Scene 4, there was a soliloquy (not included in the first quarto), in which Hamlet reproached himself for inaction. His intellectual defect was that he lacked the power to control thought. On the emotional side Hamlet had acute moral sensibility. He was grieved at his mother's re-marriage, and at her ingratitude to his father's memory. His sense of duty remained with him to the end. He had aesthetic feeling, a sense of taste, and of the fitness of things, though it was hard to understand his admiration for the lines from "Aeneas's Tale to Dido," which were bombastic in parts. His tenderness had been much exaggerated. He could be, and often was, very cruel. Polonius was something of an imbecile, but he was an old man, who had done good service to the State, and Hamlet did not show him common courtesy. Hamlet's language to Ophelia was brutal—he could never have loved her truly, in spite of his "rant" in the churchyard scene. Hamlet's violent excitability exhausted him. He spoke of "sweeping to his revenge," but he did not sweep to it—of "eating hot blood, and doing bitter business," but he drew his sword, and then sheathed it—of making his "deeds bloody" but he tamely consented to be shipped to England. There was always a reaction after his grand resolutions. His fundamental defect was lack of force in the core of his being—that force which makes for self-control and impels a man to do his duty. There was nothing in the earlier part of the play to indicate that Hamlet relied on Providence. He lacked strong faith, but he learned by experience, as was shown by his words to the King, "I see a cherub that sees your purposes, and again in the last scene—"There's a divinity that shapes our ends." He felt then that he was an instrument in the hands of Providence, and in that belief he went to his duty, and his death.

The final lecture of the season will be given to-morrow in the Queen's Hall.

PROFESSOR HENDERSON'S LECTURES

Last night at the Queen's Hall Professor Henderson delivered the third and last of his series of lectures on "Hamlet," His Excellency presiding. The attendance was very large, and the lecture was followed with eager attention.

Professor Henderson said that he was going to consider the teaching of "Hamlet" in relation to the personal character of Hamlet, and to the play

itself. Some might doubt if it were possible to discuss the "teaching" of a Shakespearean play. They would remind him that the duty of a dramatist was to make his characters speak for themselves, and that we must not identify Shakespeare with the opinions expressed by his "personae." He was aware of this, and he recognised the distinction between lyrical poetry, which was the direct expression of the poet's personality, and dramatic, in which the poet revealed himself indirectly. It was the work of the artist to make us understand his characters in their relation to each other, the "tragic fault" in the leading character, and the meaning of the great forces at work in the world. If we found out what the "tragic fault" was, we could learn to avoid the same error. Hamlet was moody, melancholy, indulging in many "asides," soliloquising, even when talking to others, not interested in the outer world. He encouraged his melancholy by keeping all men at a distance except Horatio. He wanted more of the sunlight of heaven in his soul, more impressions from the external world. Thus he was brought nearer and nearer to the brink of madness. Students would admit that after two or three weeks of intense thinking even a slight practical problem seemed almost appalling. That was how Hamlet lost the capacity for action by becoming, as Coleridge said, the "creature of meditation." He went on thinking till it was too late to act, and tragedy became inevitable. At Oxford and Cambridge sport was rightly regarded as of importance, for true sport developed not only the muscles, but also the capacity for carrying a thing through, which Hamlet lacked. He had given up his exercises, and in the fencing-scene he was "fat and scant of breath." Sport, rightly pursued, might foster grit and force in a man's being. The Germans were beginning to see that they must incorporate sport in their system, and that the English public schools, such as Eton, Harrow, and Rugby, had something which they lacked. Some men were idealists, perceiving the truth, and being the nobler for it, but others, when they saw something wrong, were not content to cry, "The time is out of joint," but they rather said, "I am here to put it right." Fourteen years ago there was not much of a harbor at Fremantle, and less than fourteen years ago there was very little water on the goldfields. Under what disabilities would W.A. now be laboring if statesmen had been content to say, "The time is out of joint?" Things were out of place, simply that we might show our manhood by rearranging circumstances, and prove that to some extent we were masters, and not creatures of our fate. Hamlet was an idealist, which is a high type, but not a strenuous idealist, which is a higher. What did Shakespeare think about the forces working in the lives of men, as reflected in the lives of his "personae?" Many had a vague belief, that when tragedy occurred, the sufferer must have done something wrong, and that his sin was finding him out. Some of

the old tragedies were founded on this idea, and some of the Shakespearean plays came near to that conception. But though Shakespeare would have agreed with Aristotle that the office of tragedy was to "purify the emotions by exciting pity and terror," he did not assume that there was a necessary proportion between moral transgression and suffering. Similarly, when Job's friends wanted him to confess that he was suffering because of sin, he resented it—and they were rebuked by the Lord. Shakespeare showed Richard II., for instance, not as an administrator, such as was needed, but as an artist. There was an incongruity between his circumstances and his character, which was one of the conditions of tragedy. Hamlet knew that he had not the capacity. How could he be held morally culpable, when called upon to exercise a quality which he did not possess? In the conflict between his will and fate he was bound to go under. Many suffered, like men in the Shakespearean plays, not because they had done wrong, but because they were not in their right place—they were at war with destiny. The moral transgression of Claudius was infinitely greater than that of Hamlet, but Hamlet's suffering was far greater. The King fell in the end, but so did Hamlet. What moral transgression could be charged against Ophelia? It was true that she betrayed Hamlet to her father, and that she consented to act as a decoy, but it must be remembered that she belonged to an old German family, in which absolute obedience was required, and that the only persons whom she really knew were her father and her brother. She firmly believed that Hamlet was mad, and she was trying to find out the cause of his madness that he might be cured. She lied when she told Hamlet that her father was at home, but if we excused Desdemona's dying falsehood, we might also excuse Ophelia, as Professor Bradley had done, for she was confronted with a madman (as she thought), who was armed with a sword. Yet Ophelia suffered—Hamlet rejected her, she learned that he had killed her father, she became mad, and was drowned. Was Shakespeare true to life? Did women really suffer like Ophelia, Desdemona, Cordelia? Yes. As Christians, they remembered that their Ideal was crucified between two malefactors. What would happen if a man who committed a wrong infallibly suffered some personal loss? Why, life would be-

come a bargain, a mere business transaction. Men would do good in order to get a return in personal happiness, and thus honor, valor, and self-sacrifice would disappear. Pope said:—"But sometimes Virtue starves, while Vice is fed."

What then? Is the reward of Virtue bread?"

No—it was a higher reward than bread—it was the development of the god-like faculties within us, which could best be developed by work, discipline, and perhaps suffering. Bacon said, "Adversity doth best discover virtue," and Seneca said, "A virtuous man struggling with misfortune is a sight which the gods may look upon with pleasure."

His Excellency moved a vote of thanks to the lecturer. The vote was carried by acclamation, and was suitably acknowledged. A vote of thanks to His Excellency was proposed by Mr Longmore, seconded by Dr. Thurstan, and carried in the usual manner.